



Mishawaka Communicator



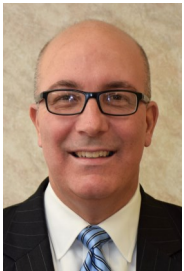
Working together to build the "Best Hometown in America" by delivering exceptional services, promoting safe and clean neighborhoods, elevating the quality of life and inspiring pride in our community.

Dave Wood, Mayor

www.mishawaka.in.gov

April 2019

A Letter from Mayor Dave Wood



On March 25, 2019, I delivered my ninth and the City's 118th State of the City address in a crowded Battell Community Center auditorium where all in attendance learned about the events, projects and initiatives that shaped our City in 2018 and our plans looking forward. This year's theme embodies what is happening in the City of Mishawaka, and what I strive for every day in my job as your Mayor: **Building a Better Community**. I'm pleased to share with you the best of Mishawaka, what is working well and what we need to work on. I continue to believe that we are at a great moment in time in the history of Mishawaka! We have challenges to be sure, but we continue to meet those challenges head on to ensure that we thrive as a city. So what is the state of our City? Mishawaka is fundamentally strong, growing, financially stable, and safe.

This year's theme was inspired by the Habitat for Humanity Carter Work Project that occurred in 2018. This job has its challenges, like any other job. That being said, all challenges seem to fade when you can be part of something truly special. The 2018 Habitat for Humanity Carter Work Project was the epitome of that type of special event. President and Mrs. Carter, along with Garth Brooks, Trisha Yearwood, and David Letterman came to town and worked tirelessly beside volunteers from all over the world to build 23 homes in one week. Mishawaka was in the forefront bringing attention to the issue of affordable housing and in the process helped to build a better community right here in the Princess City! And we did not shrink from the challenge. In fact, President Carter called it "the best organized and most pleasant that we've ever experienced...one of the best we've ever seen in the world."

Using the theme of "Building a Better Community", I provided examples of what our City departments accomplished in 2018 to build a better Mishawaka. Here is a sampling:

Mishawaka Police and Fire Department — I sleep easy at night knowing that the men and women of the Mishawaka Police Department are on watch and I am grateful for the outstanding work they perform. Although I would much rather be reporting a decrease in crime as I have for seven out of the last eight years, I am content for this year to report that crime in the City has remained relatively low and stable. According to FBI Uniform Crime Statistics reporting, there were 3,455 crimes reported in 2018. That's just 53 more than last year. Although it's a slight increase, it is consistent with the continued growth of the City where hundreds of new residential units and many new businesses were added. This points to a stable crime rate for the City.

(cont'd on next page)

Get Regular Check-ups

Health Information from Saint Joseph Health System

Regular check-ups can improve your health and longevity by identifying problems before they start.

"The type of exams you need and how often you need them is influenced by factors such as age, gender, health and family history and lifestyle choices," said Dr. Nathaniel Stewart, primary care provider at River Park Family Medicine in South Bend.

Talk to your doctor about what screenings and exams you need, which may include early detection for:

- Breast and cervical cancer
- High cholesterol
- Colorectal cancer
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Prostate cancer
- HIV/AIDS
- Viral hepatitis
- Skin cancer

To make the most of your next check-up:

- Review your family medical history
- Ask your doctor if it is time for any vaccinations, follow-up exams or tests
- Be honest with your doctor
- Prepare a list of issues and questions regarding any changes in existing health conditions, mood, sleeping or eating habits, etc.

To learn more, visit ThisCounts.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Apr 9 Grandparent and Me "Animal April" (Battell Center)
- Apr 14 Easter Egg Hunt (Central Park)
- Apr 18 Winter Concert "Elephant Rescue Band" (Battell Center)
- Apr 19 Good Friday - City Offices Closed
- Apr 20 Best Disc Doubles Tournament (George Wilson Park)
- Apr 24 Urban Forestry & Green Infrastructure Seminar (Battell Center)
- May 3 Beutter Bridge Ball (Beutter Park)
- May 11 Magical MOMs (Battell Center)
- May 18 Kids to Parks Day (Hillis Hans Park)
- May 27 Memorial Day Kids Dash (Battell Park)
- Jun 14 - Tent the Island 15 (Kamm Island Park)

Military Hometown Heroes Banner Program Returns

For more information or to purchase a banner, visit

<http://mishawaka.in.gov/military-hometown-heroes>

ONLINE ACCESS

- <http://mishawaka.in.gov>
- <http://facebook.com/cityofmishawaka>
- <http://mishawaka.in.gov/communicator>
- <http://mishawaka.in.gov/parksandrecreation>
- <https://twitter.com/MishawakaMayor>
- <https://instagram.com/MishawakaMayor/>

Send your questions, comments, or concerns to communicator_feedback@mishawaka.in.gov

A Letter from Mayor Dave Wood *(continued)*

The Mishawaka Fire Department had another record-setting year, responding to 8,009 calls for service. This is 577 more than 2017. Only 158 of those calls involved a commercial, residential, apartment or other type of fire. On the theme of building a better community, the Fire Department does much more than fight fires and serve as our first responders. Part of building a better community is being actively involved in it. In this regard, the members of the MFD performed over 25,970 hours of public service in 2018. That is not only outstanding; that is building a better community!

City Finances — A better community requires that we have adequate funding and that the money is managed wisely. Working with the Common Council in 2018, Mishawaka passed another honestly balanced budget that provides investment in public safety, streets, and parks. Mishawaka's success is based on being fiscally conservative and not incurring long-term legacy costs that could jeopardize our stability in times of uncertainty. We still have challenges, including State-mandated property tax caps that severely limit our revenue and slow-to-stagnant growth of assessed valuation of all property. We will see \$10 million less annually by 2023 as a result of the tax caps.

Central Services — One of the ways to assess the health of a community is to review how it cares for streets and other public property. When I am traveling throughout the state, I always make a point to review the condition and appearance of other cities. Like all cities, Mishawaka is limited by a very fixed amount of resources, and unlike some of our peers, such as the newer border cities around Indianapolis, our City infrastructure dates back to 1833. In my travels I always believe that Mishawaka compares favorably to every other city that I visit. It is the responsibility of the Central Services Department to maintain 700 acres of city-owned properties, 330 lane miles of roadway and 19 miles of sidewalks including the Riverwalk.

Parks and Recreation — There is no more relevant associated pairing of phrases than "Building a Better Community" and "providing for Parks and Recreation". The City of Mishawaka Parks Department plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for the Mishawaka community. The City continues to be committed to engaging through new events, programs, and activities. In the last year the Park Department created over 17 new special events along with the expansion of our summer camps to provide opportunities for all ages and abilities. But the one that is generating a lot of excitement is the Mishawaka Farmers Market @ Central Park coming this year. It will take place on Sundays throughout the summer, we are already getting a great response and you will not want to miss it.

Code Enforcement — Decay is a main issue facing many Indiana cities. Part of maintaining our community is staying on top of problem conditions and properties. Mishawaka has always been known for its clean and well-kept neighborhoods and neighborhood stability remains a top priority. It is well known that vacant or blighted structures can become a haven for criminal activity and other undesirable issues. Code Enforcement's prompt and proactive action taken on a daily basis helps prevent the deterioration of neighborhoods. In 2018 we focused on alleys. This emphasis resulted in a 79 case increase in abandoned vehicles and a cleaner City. Overall, our code officers investigated a record total of 5,842 public nuisance cases in 2018, up 39 cases from 2017. It is important to note that our four code officers also had 10,211 follow-ups on these violations.

Continued implementation of our Top 100 Program is one of the reasons why you won't see many substandard structures in Mishawaka. This yearly initiative begins when code officers scout their areas in search of the houses, garages, or commercial buildings that need to be brought up to code. In 2018, Code Enforcement was able to bring 65 of these structures into compliance. This marks the 13th year of the Top 100 Program, having brought over 1,000 homes up to code. This initiative continues to make a huge positive difference in our community.

Engineering — Infrastructure is the basic, essential building block of every successful community - and economy. Building a better community means that we are constantly maintaining, improving, and adding on to that infrastructure. Our Engineering Department does a masterful job of organizing our design consultants and contractors to make sure that we spend money wisely on capital improvements and that they are designed and built with the future in mind. Construction completed in 2018 totaled approximately \$16.8 million.

Mishawaka Utilities — The City's utilities are increasingly becoming key to our strategic growth and among our most vital services. While I believe that our utilities have the potential to give us a competitive advantage to attract new business well into the future, we are also trying to keep pace with federal and state regulations and unfunded mandates which force us to walk a fine line between our obligation to comply with mandates and keeping rates competitive. I like to say that the sign of a thriving community is represented by what our citizens are able to take for granted. Our utilities, including water, wastewater and electric fall into this category. We are managing some major projects including a new 2 million-gallon water reservoir located on Ireland Trail south of Dragon Trail, new Juday Creek well field, multiple sewer projects and the conversion of our electric grid from 4 kv to 12 kv.

My summary highlights only a few accomplishments and on-going efforts. I would encourage everyone to read the full reports for the complete perspective. The entire State of the City report can be accessed at <http://www.mishawaka.in.gov/soc2019>.

Although I get the honor and privilege to share with you the collective works that make Mishawaka the "Best Hometown in America", it is the great people and the public servants that I get to work with each and every day that make this City thrive. It not only shows in the great service they provide, but also in the manner in which they provide it. Mishawaka is special because of their world-class service. Sometimes it takes someone who doesn't live here every day to recognize it and remind us what we can take for granted. I was reminded of how blessed we are when I saw Garth Brooks mention in a video, "What you guys have over every other place on the planet is community." ***I believe it, I've witnessed it.***

May the Princess always look over your shoulder and may God continue to bless you, our citizens, our staff and our beloved City of Mishawaka.

Yours in Mishawaka,

